

WEST VIRGINIA NATIONAL GUARD HRO NEWSLETTER



1st Quarter 2011

FROM THE DESK OF COL CRANE - HRO

I want to take a moment to let you know that I am leaving the position as the Human Resource Officer. I will be starting a new position as The Army Chief of Staff effective 20 January 2011. I have enjoyed my tenure as the Human Resource Officer and appreciate having had the opportunity to work with you. Thank you for the support, guidance, and encouragement that you have provided me during my time as the Human Resource Officer. I applaud the HRO staff and the great improvements that have been accomplished over the last year. Even though I will miss the daily working relationship with my Air National Guard colleagues and the many mentors of the Human Resource arena, I look forward to the challenge of my new appointment.

LTC Craig Lambert has been appointed as the new Human Resource Officer.

MANAGEMENT ANALYST

Greetings! Hope everyone had a great holiday season! While most of us are diligent in ensuring we do what is correct, it seems we are having an issue with technicians traveling without final authorization of their Defense Travel System (DTS) orders. This not only puts the government at risk, it also puts the technician at risk. Once a technician assumes the risk of traveling without an authorization the government is no longer liable for the expenses incurred. In the past, we have worked with the travelers to ensure no one was held liable for traveling without the authorization. Currently due to limited funding this can no longer be the case. As it states in the JFTR, Chapter 2, Administration and General Procedures, Part B: Orders, "Travel reimbursement is not authorized when the travel is performed before receipt of a written or verbal order." As good stewards of government funding we must also ask ourselves, if the travel is necessary, can we travel with others to save funding and what method of travel best serves the mission. Travel is intended to meet the goals and missions of the West Virginia National Guard. Any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call.



FEBRUARY 14th

HAPPY

VALENTINES DAY!

AGR MANAGEMENT

The AGR Section would like to take this opportunity to welcome SrA Reedy back from his deployment to Afghanistan; his main focus will continue to be reviewing and processing AGR job application packets. All AGR personnel should check their LES to ensure they are being paid the correct BAH, based off their duty location. If an AGR Soldier transfers to a new unit/location they must submit a DA Form 5960 through their unit to adjust their BAH. The AGR pay SOP has been posted on the HRO web site <http://www.wv.ngb.army.mil/jobs/AGR/Army/default.html> all pay transactions are covered in the pay SOP. The SOP has been constructed so all units will know what documentation is needed, by the AGR section and USPFO, to process specific pay transactions. It is important that all AGR personnel review the SOP so they will be better equipped to assist Soldiers with pay transactions. The SOP covers transactions such as: marriage, divorce, birth of a child, direct deposit, BAH, promotions, reductions, name change, resignations, etc. All pay transactions should go through a Soldiers unit, to the AGR section, who forward the transaction to USPFO on a track it. Once the track it is closed and the transaction has been processed by USPFO the Soldier and/or the Soldiers unit will receive a confirmation email from the AGR section. It is our goal to process all pay transactions in a timely manner, and with the AGR pay SOP now available to all AGR personnel we believe that the process will improve tremendously.

EEO

- February - Black History Month theme: African Americans and the Civil War
- March - Women's History Month theme: Our History is Our Strength.

STAFFING

- As some have experienced, the HRO application has been troublesome when trying to save your information. We have replaced the application with a new version that now enables you to save. The application is located on the HRO website in the same location under Tech Application.
- Be advised that when requesting to advertise a position and you wish it to distributed Nationwide, Supervisors must request this to the Staffing Section when submitting the SF 52

WV ESGR

Patriot Award – Spouse Nominator

- Spouses award your Employer! Recognize your boss for his or her support of National
- Guard and Reserve members. Nominate him or her for a "Patriot Award". Your employer will receive a Department of Defense Certificate of Appreciation and a Patriot lapel pin. All spouses of member of the National Guard and Reserve are eligible to nominate their employers. Go to www.esgr.mil to nominate your Employer today!

TECHNICIAN BENEFITS

Hot Topics

TSP Contribution Limits for 2011

Elective Deferral Limit* - \$16,500 IRC §402(g) – Applies only to regular employee contributions that are made in before-tax (i.e. tax-deferred) dollars. For members of the uniformed services, this includes all tax-deferred contributions from taxable **basic pay, incentive pay, special pay, bonus pay.**

Annual Addition Limit - \$49,000 IRC §415© - An additional limit imposed on the total amount of all contributions made on behalf of an employee in a calendar year. Uniformed service members become subject to this limit when **tax-exempt contributions** are made to their TSP accounts. This limit includes employee contributions (both tax-deferred and tax-exempt), **Agency Automatic (1%), and Agency Matching Contributions.**

Catch-up Contribution Limit - \$5,500 IRC §414(v) – The maximum amount of **catch-up contributions** that can be contributed in a given year by participants age 50 and older. It is separate from the elective deferral and annual addition limit imposed on regular employee contributions.

*The elective deferral limit does not apply to contributions made from the tax-exempt pay a member of the uniformed services may receive.

For Uniformed Service Members, you should pay particular attention to the Section 415(c) annual addition limit. If you contribute from pay that is subject to the combat zone exclusion, this limit allows you to put more money into your TSP account than the elective deferral limit would permit. In addition, if you are eligible to make **catch-up contributions** and you are deployed to a designated combat zone, you must earn basic pay each month that is not subject to the combat zone tax exclusion. If 100% of your pay is tax-exempt, you will not be able to make **catch-up contributions.**

If you are a Dual Status Technicians, and you are contributing to both a uniformed services and a civilian TSP account as a FERS employee, the elective deferral and catch-up limits apply to the total amount of tax-deferred employee contributions you make in a calendar year to both accounts.

**If you are called to active duty and make tax-exempt contributions to the TSP while deployed in a designated combat zone, the sum of all of your regular tax-exempt and tax-deferred contributions to both your uniformed services and civilian TSP accounts combined (including any agency contributions made to your civilian account) cannot exceed the section 415(c) annual addition limit.

TSP Changes

On December 31, the TSP L 2010 Fund will close. If you have investments in the L 2010 Fund, they will be moved to the L Income Fund on December 3, 2010. If you have allocated any portion of future contributions to the L 2010 Fund, that allocation will automatically changed to the L Income Fund. You do not need to take any action, but if you want to change your contribution allocation or do an interfund transfer to change the investment mix of money already in your account, simply visit www.tsp.gov to set up or log into your TSP account.

In addition, TSP will launch a new Lifecycle fund, the L2050 Fund on January 31, 2011.

- The L2050 Fund will open on January 31 with an initial share price of \$10. As the L Fund with the most distant time horizon, its investment mix will feature higher percentages in domestic and foreign stocks (the C, S, and I Funds) and lower percentages of Government securities and bonds (the G and F Funds). Participants can begin making contribution allocations and interfund transfers into the L 2050 Fund beginning at 12 noon Eastern time on January 28. These elections will become effective on January 31. For more information on how the TSP Lifecycle Funds work and on who should invest, Visit the TSP website

Awards: Incentive awards are an effective means to achieve greater efficiency, economy, and improvement of operations in the WV National Guard. The technician awards program recognizes and rewards individuals or groups of individuals for their achievements.

Awards available are:

- Suggestions
- Inventions
- Sustained Superior Performance (SSP)
- Special Acts or Service
- Length of Service Recognition
- Honorary Awards
- Letters of Commendation or Appreciation
- Quality Step Increase (QSI)
- On the Spot Cash Award
- Time Off Award

It is important for all supervisors of technician employees to read the regulation for awards procedures, WV Supplement TPR 451, and pay close attention to the mandatory time requirements that must be satisfied when submitting the NGB Form 32 and supporting documents for an award. Failure to submit all documentation during the period for a specific award may result in a denial due to non-compliance.

Pay Freeze for Federal Employees:

In compliance with the Presidential Memorandum, SUBJECT: Freezing Federal Employee Schedules and Rates That Are Set By Administrative Discretion, dated 22 December 2010 (see the HRO website for full Presidential memorandum), there will be no increases in Federal Pay for 2011 and 2012. Therefore, there will be no SF50 for Annual GS/FWS Pay Adjustments produced during the calendar years 2011 and 2012.

Temporary Decrease in the Social Security Employee Tax Rate The “Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010” provides that during 2011 the Social Security employee tax rate will be temporarily decreased from 6.2% to 4.2%. The temporary reduction in the Social Security tax rate will not affect the employee retirement contribution rates for employees under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), CSRS-offset, or the Federal Employees’ Retirement System. As a result, CSRS-offset and FERS employees will see their payroll deductions decrease by 2% up to the 2011 Social Security maximum taxable income of \$106,800 (unchanged from 2010). There will be no deduction change based on this Act for CSRS employees.

EBIS

Reminder to all Technicians (Army and Air): access to EBIS is controlled via AKO authentication. As such, **any** user requiring access to EBIS must register in AKO. By registering in AKO, this provides AKO users an Army domain email account and the CAC information used for authenticating users into EBIS, an Army Information System (AIS). The Army Benefits Center uses the AKO interface to build and maintain its’ EBIS Access Control List which is used in allowing authorized AKO users access to EBIS. Once you have registered in AKO, you can proceed to register in EBIS. Until you have registered and received an AKO account, you will not be able to register or access EBIS. If you are having a problem registering for an AKO account, please contact the AKO Helpdesk not the Army Benefits Center Helpdesk. If you have problems registering with EBIS then contact the Army Benefits Center Helpdesk. But make sure you have an AKO account before you contact the Army Benefits Center.



Labor Relations

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF WEINGARTEN RIGHTS EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT TO UNION REPRESENTATION

- The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute gives technicians, represented by an exclusive labor organization, the right to have union representation at a formal meeting that involves an examination by a representative of the agency that may lead to adverse action against the employee.
- The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations states that:
 "An exclusive representative of the appropriate unit in an agency shall be given the opportunity to be represented at –
 (A) any formal discussion between one or more representatives of the agency and one or more employees in the unit of their representative concerning any grievance or any personnel policy or practices or other general condition of employment; or
 (B) any examination of an employee in the unit by a representative of the agency in connection with an investigation if –
 I. The employee reasonably believes that the examination may result in disciplinary action against the employee; and
 II. The employee requests representation."
- The union may designate the representative of their choice to attend a "Weingarten meeting," the union may ask management what the investigation is about, and the union may request a reasonable delay in order to provide a representative that is familiar with the matter at hand. Managers may choose to allow the union representative to briefly consult with the employee before the meeting.
- The union representative's primary role is to ensure that the employee has an opportunity to present favorable facts and extenuating or mitigating circumstances, to clarify questions being asked, to consult with the employee during the meeting, and to raise relevant issues related to the investigation.
- During the meeting, union officials may not:
 1. Unreasonably delay the meeting because a particular representative is unavailable
 2. Insist that more than one representative attend the meeting
 3. Demand that the questions be given to them prior to the meeting
 4. Hide or confuse facts
 5. Answer questions for the employee, or interrupt the questioning of the employee
 6. Raise unrelated issues
 7. Disrupt, impede or delay the meeting
- Supervisors are advised to contact the HRO/LRS at 304-561-6422 if there is a need to conduct an investigation that may result in adverse action for any employee and it is also advisable to include union representatives early in the process.

Self Service Employment Verification provides employees the ability to log into 'My Biz' and submit employee information to an external organization (business, bank) in a secure email directly from DCPDS. From the Navigation page at <https://compo.dcpds.cpms.osd.mil/>, select My Biz then Employment Verification. There are two selections under Details to Share – Employment Information sends name, current date, job, organization, last 4 of social security number (SSN), employment status, start dates, and rate of pay; Employment and Salary Information sends the same employment information, plus total salary.

Recipient Information allows you to input one email address in the "To" field and your address in the "CC" field. Send separate notices if you need to send Employment Verification notices to multiple recipients. Select Continue then ACKNOWLEDGE AND SUBMIT to continue; or select the cancel button to return to the My Biz home page and no employment verification information will be sent.

A WARNING PAGE shows the email addresses that will receive the employment verification information, as the Disclaimer states, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure the emailed recipients receive the Employment Verification. The Confirmation page shows the email address to which the employment verification information was sent. Check your email for the "CC" copy.

TIP: Before you begin, review your personal information (e.g., name, job, employment status and salary) under My Information, General Information.

TIP: Always send a copy to your work email address - you will receive the exact same email the external organization will receive - with a date/time stamp, the email addresses sent and the employment information sent.

HRO CONTACT NAMES AND NUMBERS

LTC Craig Lambert- Human Resource Officer: 561-6345
Ms. Kay Pahl- Deputy Human Resource Officer: 561-6432
MSG Nancy Jennings-Management Analyst: 561- 6411
Lt Col Doyle Hayes- Labor Relations: 561-6422
Lt Col Kenny Hale- SEEM/EEO: 561-6430
Mr. Rick Riblett- Human Resource Assistant: 561-6606
CPT Scott Bossie- AGR Manager: 561-6424
SSG Pete Campbell- AGR Assistant: 561-6423
SSG Anthony Barton- Transition Point NCO: 561-6789
SGT Christy Bryson - Transition Point NCO: 561-6682
SrA Daniel Reedy – AGR Assistant: 561-6425
CW2 Craig Goldsberry- Training Development Spec: 561-6433
TSgt Dennis Brogan – Training Development Spec: 561-6694
WO1 Siobhan O'Flaherty- Technician Manager: 561- 6357
SGT Andy Jenkins- Classification Specialist: 561-6680
TSgt Keelee Goode- Recruitment/Placement Specialist: 561-6605
SGT Brittany Willard- Staffing Assistant: 561-6426
SSgt Freda Harmon- Staffing Specialist: 561-6437
CMSgt Scott Miller- HR Info Systems Chief 561-6427
SGT Jennifer Campbell-Employee Relations Specialist: 561-6431
SSG Michelle Woodall - Technician Benefits Specialist: 561-6428
SPC Matthew Thomas – Technician Benefits Assistant: 561-6679
SGT Brooke Goldsberry – Retirements/OWCP Specialist: 561-6429
TSgt Gretchen Close - 167th H.R. Assistant: 616-5330
SSgt Leanne Snodgrass- 167th H.R. Assistant: 616-5317
CPT Bridget Saunders - SARC: 561-6681
LTC Joel Miltenberger - ESGR: 201-3579
Mr. Ed Bowman - ESGR: 201-3578
Ms. Beth White - ESGR: 561-6438
HRO Fax Machine- 304-561-6435

